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SHORT HILLS PROVINCIAL PARK

Policy Recommendations
Report



Short Hills Provincial Park Advisory Committee July 1974

SHORT HILLS PROVINCIAL PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

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The Advisory Committee members were invited to review the extent of the park as originally proposed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and to consider possible extended boundaries for the park. In this regard the recommendations which follow are presented in two parts.

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July 1974.

Honourable Leo Bernier,
Minister of Natural Resources,
Whitney Block, Queen's Park,
TORONTO, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Bernier:

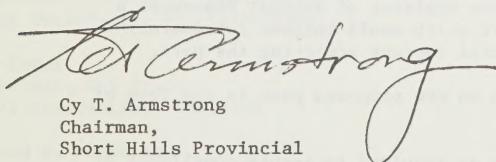
We are pleased to present to you our Policy Recommendations Report for the planning of the Short Hills Provincial Park.

Since early October 1973, the Advisory Committee has been meeting on a regular basis to deliberate many important park policy matters. Also, during this period, we have encouraged a wide range of public participation by inviting the submission of briefs and holding Public Hearings. Subsequently, many important suggestions were received and accepted for inclusion in this report. A copy of all the submissions, as a supplement to this document, will be forwarded to you for your reference.

On behalf of the Advisory Committee, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Natural Resources staff, who assisted in the preparation of the report. Also, the valuable commentary and advice provided by interested citizens and local government officials is gratefully acknowledged.

In the hope that the policy recommendations contained herein will serve as a guide for the future development of the park, this report is respectfully submitted for your review and consideration.

Yours truly,


Cy T. Armstrong
Chairman,
Short Hills Provincial
Park Advisory Committee.

CTS/gv



FORWARD

The Niagara Escarpment, extending from the Niagara River to Tobermory, is one of Ontario's most precious and widely used natural resources. A unique physical feature of this phenomenon is the Short Hills area which is a large embayment of the escarpment filled with glacial drift. The eroding waters of the Twelve Mile Creek have carved this area into one of the most thoroughly dissected areas of Southern Ontario. Located in Pelham and Thorold, southwest of the City of St. Catharines, the Short Hills area is centrally situated in the Regional Municipality of Niagara.

In general, the Short Hills area offers a mosaic of natural features including forests, open fields, hills, gorges, waterfalls, streams, scenic view-points, unusual rock formations, and interesting plant and animal life. Also, the area is of interest because of the many important historical features associated with the surrounding region.

The Niagara Escarpment Study, presented to the Ontario Government in 1969, made an important recommendation regarding the future recreational use of the Short Hills area. The hilly countryside of forests and open spaces is one of the few expansive areas between Hamilton and Niagara Falls that offers the residents of the Niagara Region a relatively large natural environment area for more passive recreational opportunities. Following consideration of the Niagara Escarpment Study Report, the Government has been acquiring land in the Short Hills area for a proposed 1,700 acre Provincial Park.

In October 1973, the Honourable Leo Bernier, Minister of Natural Resources, announced the formation of the Short Hills Provincial Park Advisory Committee to make recommendations for the development and management of the proposed park taking into account local, regional and provincial considerations. Since that time, the Advisory Committee has carefully studied the area and has considered over 350 submissions from individuals, clubs, organizations and local municipalities. Also, many important views were expressed at the Public Hearings held during January and May, 1974 in Pelham and St. Catharines.

The Policy Recommendations Report summarizes the efforts of the Advisory Committee to prepare guidelines for the planning of a Provincial Park in the unique and scenic Short Hills area.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference of the Short Hills Provincial Park Advisory Committee are as follows:

- (1) To review and recommend to the Minister of Natural Resources a master plan for the proposed park which would include consideration of: local, regional and provincial factors affecting the park.
- (2) To solicit public viewpoints on the proposed park in the form of briefs and/or hearings.
- (3) To review detailed proposals as required to assure compliance of planning and engineering with the overall master plan.

The Committee be further advised that each member be paid for every day taken in attendance at meetings of the Committee his actual expenses incurred for accommodation, meals and transportation.

PLANNING PARTICIPANTS

A. MEMBERS OF SHORT HILLS PROVINCIAL PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Upon the invitation of the Honourable Leo Bernier, Minister of Natural Resources, the following citizens, residents of the municipalities indicated, were appointed and agreed to serve on the Committee.

Cy T. Armstrong (Chairman)
Co-ordinator, The Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth, St. Catharines

Donald A. McMillan (Vice-Chairman)
Mayor, Town of Thorold, Thorold

Harold E. Black
Mayor, Town of Pelham, Pelham

William Brooks
Businessman, Wellandport

Dorothy Burgoyne
Businesswoman, St. Catharines

Kady Denton
Former Professional Planner, Pelham

Francis D. Goldring
Chairman, Niagara Peninsula
Conservation Authority, Pelham

Alec Greaves
Former Director of Planning, Regional
Municipality of Niagara, Niagara Falls
(Resigned from the Advisory Committee,
February, 1974)

John N. Jackson
Professor, Geography Department,
Brock University, St. Catharines

Ray Lowes
Secretary, The Bruce
Trail Association, Hamilton

Gerald B. McKeating
Environmental Consultant, Toronto

Arthur V. Stead
Director of Recreation, Port Colborne

B. PROJECT TEAM MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

To assist the Committee in its deliberations and to provide information on the more technical and professional elements of planning and plan implementation, the following Ministry of Natural Resources Staff were assigned to the project.

Tom Lee
Director, Park Planning Branch

Norm Richards
Supervisor, Master Planning Section

John Featherston
Parks and Recreation Co-ordinator,
Central Region

Sabu George
Master Planner, Central Region

Doug Townsend
Fish, Wildlife and Parks Supervisor,
Niagara District

William B. Sargent
Park Planner, Secretary to the Short Hills
Provincial Park Advisory Committee

PART 1: SHORT HILLS PROVINCIAL PARK

1. PARK NAME

Several proposed names have been reviewed, but "The Short Hills Provincial Park" is the Committee's preference. This name reflects the unique physical characteristics of the park; it is a well known and accepted name; it is readily identifiable by the regional populace, and it has important historical antecedents in documents dating from the 1820's.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1: The park should be named "The Short Hills Provincial Park".

11. PARK GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

1. PARK GOAL

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2: The goal for the Short Hills Provincial Park is to provide a variety of high quality recreational opportunities within a natural environment of educational, scientific, and recreational significance.

2. PARK OBJECTIVES

User Opportunities:

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3: The primary objective of the park should be to provide lightly developed, year-round, recreational day-use activities for people of different interests, ages and states of health and mobility. The provision of extended-use activities and facilities such as walk-in short term camping would be a secondary objective.

Natural Environment:

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4: Careful planning should be carried out to ensure the protection and preservation of the natural environment, especially those fragile areas of geological, biological, historical, and archeological significance.

Development Programmes:

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5: The Ministry of Natural Resources should provide the optimum level of development necessary to stimulate a programme for visitor enjoyment of the natural attractiveness of the park.

Interpretation and Outdoor Education:

RECOMMENDATION NO. 6: A park programme should be developed to provide for a variety of interpretive and outdoor educational experiences by managing and maintaining a quality environment. The provincial significance of the Niagara Escarpment in relation to the park should be stressed in the interpretive programme.

3. PARK CLASSIFICATION

RECOMMENDATION NO. 7: The Short Hills Provincial Park should be classified as a Natural Environment Provincial Park according to the Ontario Provincial Park Classification System. Natural Environment Provincial Parks reserve outstanding aesthetic, natural, and historical features for recreation and education. These parks include facilities for camping and picnicking, hiking and nature interpretation.

The location of the park in relation to the population and other major area parks in the surrounding region is shown in Figures 1 and 2 respectively. It should be noted that the population numbers do not include a large American population within the same time-distance zones.

III. LAND USE

The attributes and potential of the park are stated in virtually all the briefs and submissions to be those of its natural and scenic character. The request, overwhelmingly, is that these features should provide the basis for park planning. These features include:

- the drainage pattern;
- the incised terrain of hills and valleys;
- flora and fauna;
- location on the fringe of the Niagara Escarpment;
- glacial deposits, erosional features and associated ecological environments;
- unique historical endowments such as mills, mill sites, and a close interaction with early pioneer settlement;
- a continuing and changing use of water, land, and vegetation;
- historical associations of regional, provincial, and national interest.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 8: The essential character of the park should be a lightly-developed area in which natural conditions will predominate. The natural environment with its scenic and historical associations should, essentially, be retained and enhanced.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 9: All historic features should be identified. The enhancement, the preservation and the enjoyment of these features by the public should provide an important reason for the park now and in the future. The educational and visual enjoyment of the park amenities should be the motivating element in planning the park facilities.

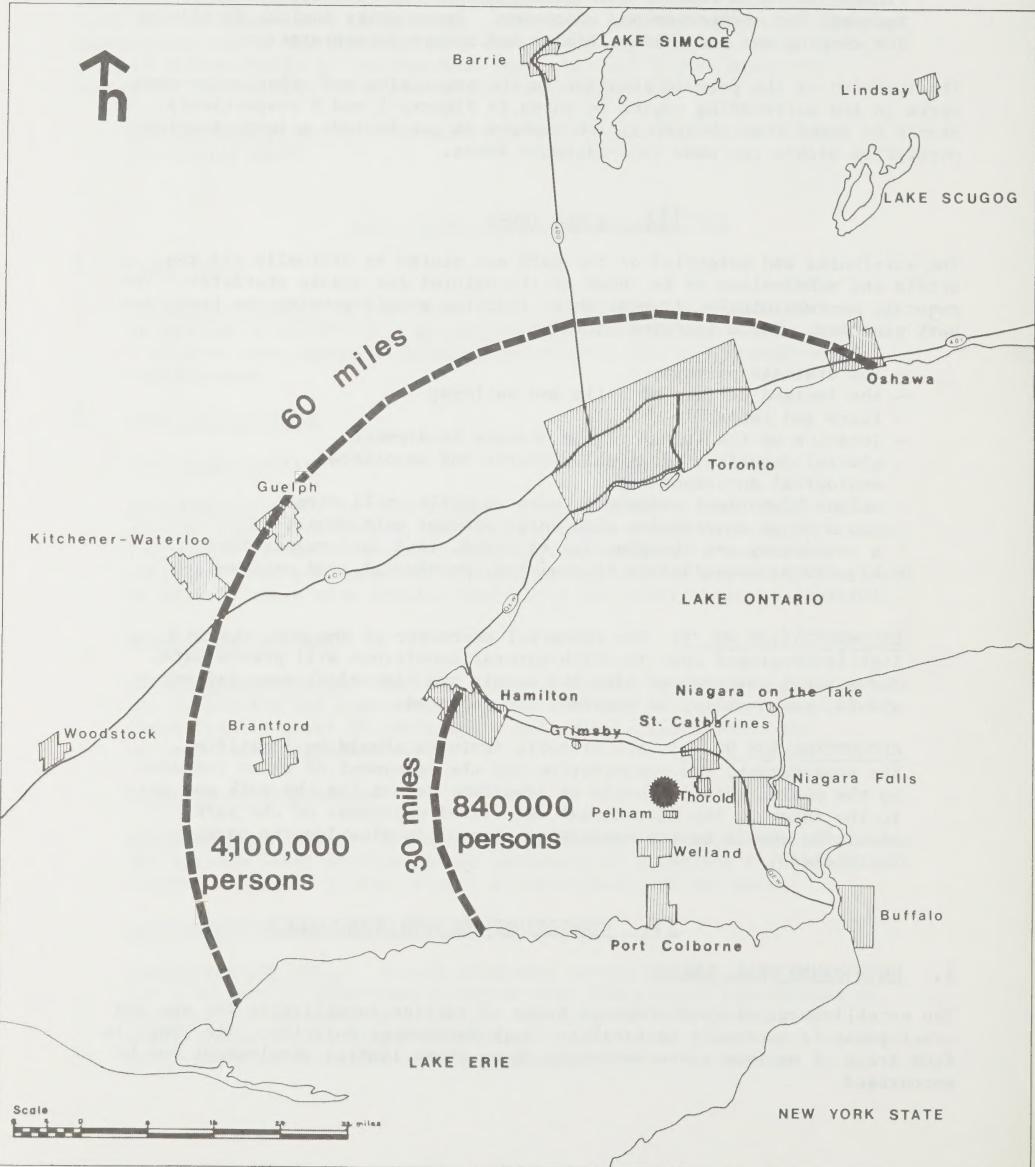
IV. CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES

1. ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS

The establishment of Environmental Areas of varying capabilities for use and development is necessary to establish park management policies. The range is from areas of maximum preservation to those where limited development may be encouraged.

Population (Ontario)

● Park Location

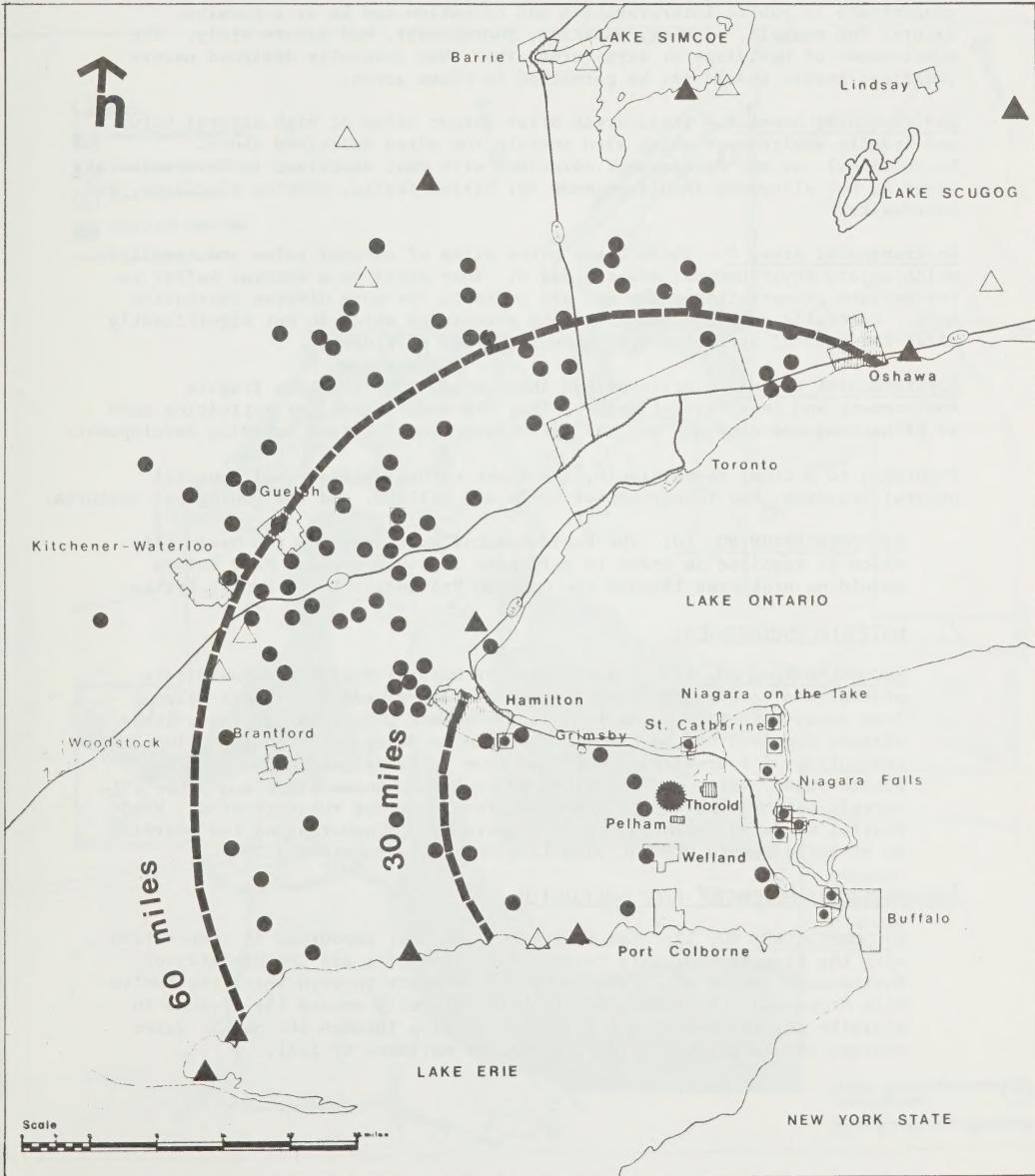


Major Public Parks

page 4.

2

- Park Location
- ▲ Provincial Parks
- △ Park Reserves
- Conservation Areas
- ▣ Niagara Parks



Environmental Areas A - These areas contain significant sites of a high natural value (such as biological, geological, historical, and archaeological phenomena) and fragile environment which should be preserved and protected for scientific and educational purposes. Sites within these areas may be set aside exclusively for scientific study. Acceptable recreation use would concentrate on public interpretation and education and be of a passive nature; for example, viewing, painting, photography, and nature study. The development of buildings or structures other than carefully designed nature (walking) trails should not be permitted in these areas.

Environmental Areas B - These areas offer larger sites of high natural value and fragile environment which also contain the sites described above. Recreational use and development coincides with that described in Environmental Areas A, but allowance should be made for hiking trails, viewing platforms, and boardwalks.

Environmental Areas C - These areas offer sites of natural value and fragility which adjoin Environmental Areas A and B. They serve as a natural buffer to the maximum preservation areas and are suitable for more diverse recreation uses. Carefully designed buildings and structures which do not significantly alter the natural setting may be considered for development.

Environmental Areas D - Sites within these areas are of a less fragile environment and less natural value. They are best suited for activities such as picnicking and camping, and can accommodate some limited building development.

Figures 3 to 6 show, respectively, the above natural areas, their special natural features, the topography of hills and valleys, and the geological features.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 10: The Environmental Areas provide the basic data which is required in order to delineate land use zones. Park values should be protected through the Ontario Provincial Parks Zoning System.

2. INTERIM MANAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATION NO. 11: The Ministry of Natural Resources should take precautions to protect special areas of natural and historical value from impairment through an interim management programme for those lands already acquired by the Crown. The Interim Management should include prevention of four-wheeled vehicles from entering except on existing public roads. Also, motorcycles, motor bikes, snowmobiles and other all-terrain vehicles should be prevented from entering the park area. Weed control measures, maintenance of orchards and vineyards and the boarding up of buildings to prevent vandalism should be considered.

3. WATER MANAGEMENT AND POLLUTION

RECOMMENDATION NO. 12: The Ministry of Natural Resources in cooperation with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and the Ministry of Environment should encourage owners of property through which the Twelve Mile Creek and its tributaries flow to carefully manage the streams to minimize pollution problems of waters flowing through the park. Water courses should not be altered, dammed or narrowed by fill.

Environmental Areas

Legend

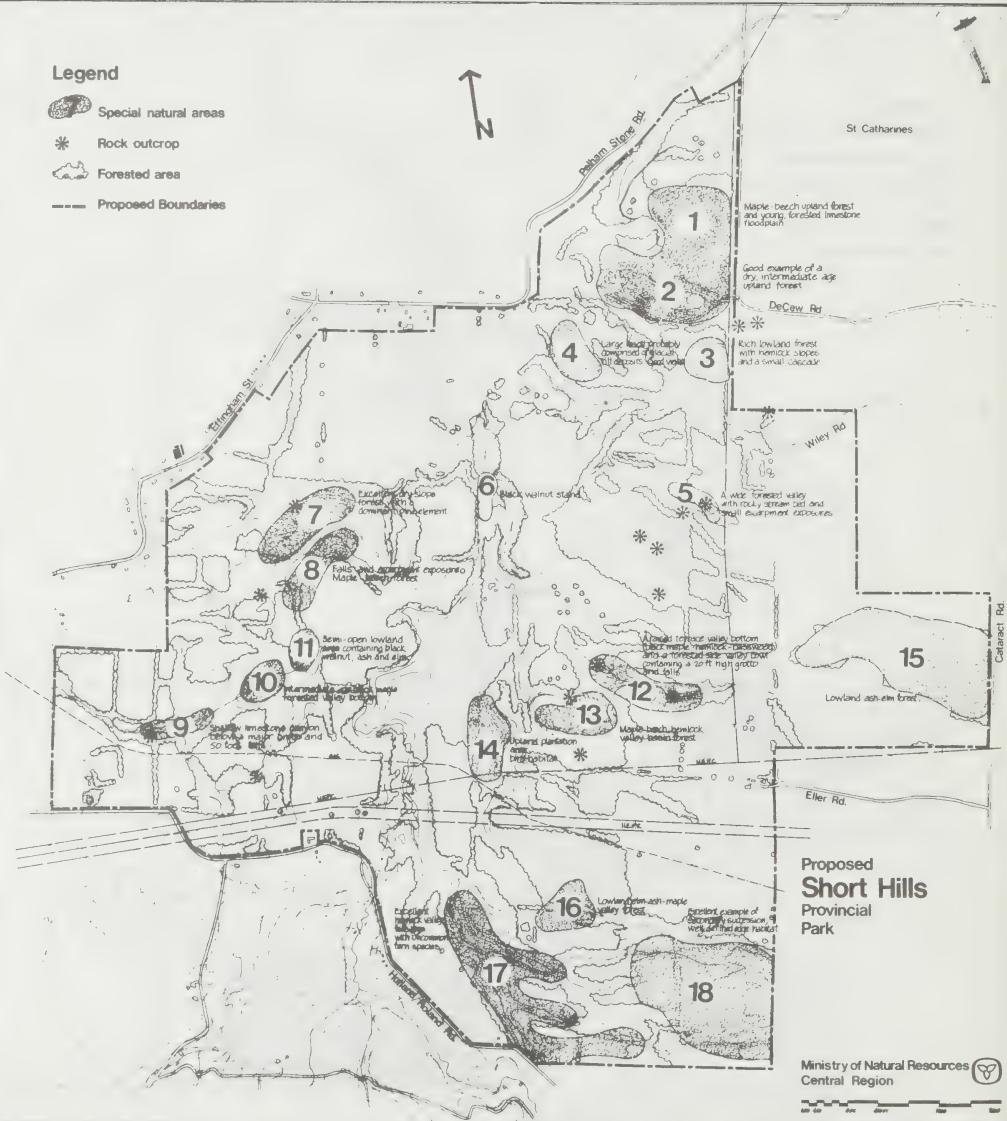
- A** Areas of Highest Natural Value
- B** Areas of High Natural Value
- C** Areas of Natural Value
- D** Areas of Little Natural Value
- Proposed Boundaries



Special Natural Features

Legend

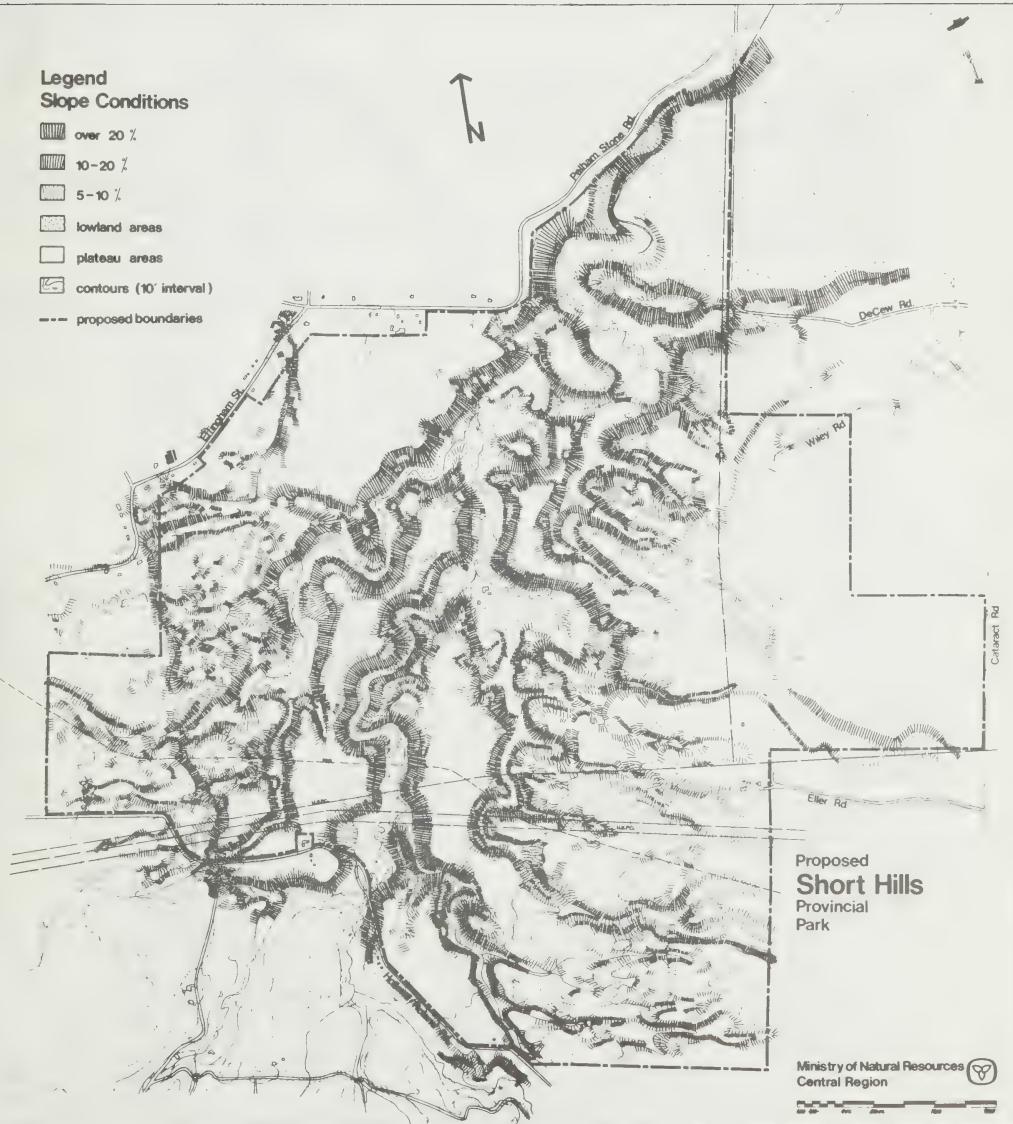
-  Special natural areas
-  Rock outcrop
-  Forested area
-  Proposed Boundaries



Topographical Analysis

Legend Slope Conditions

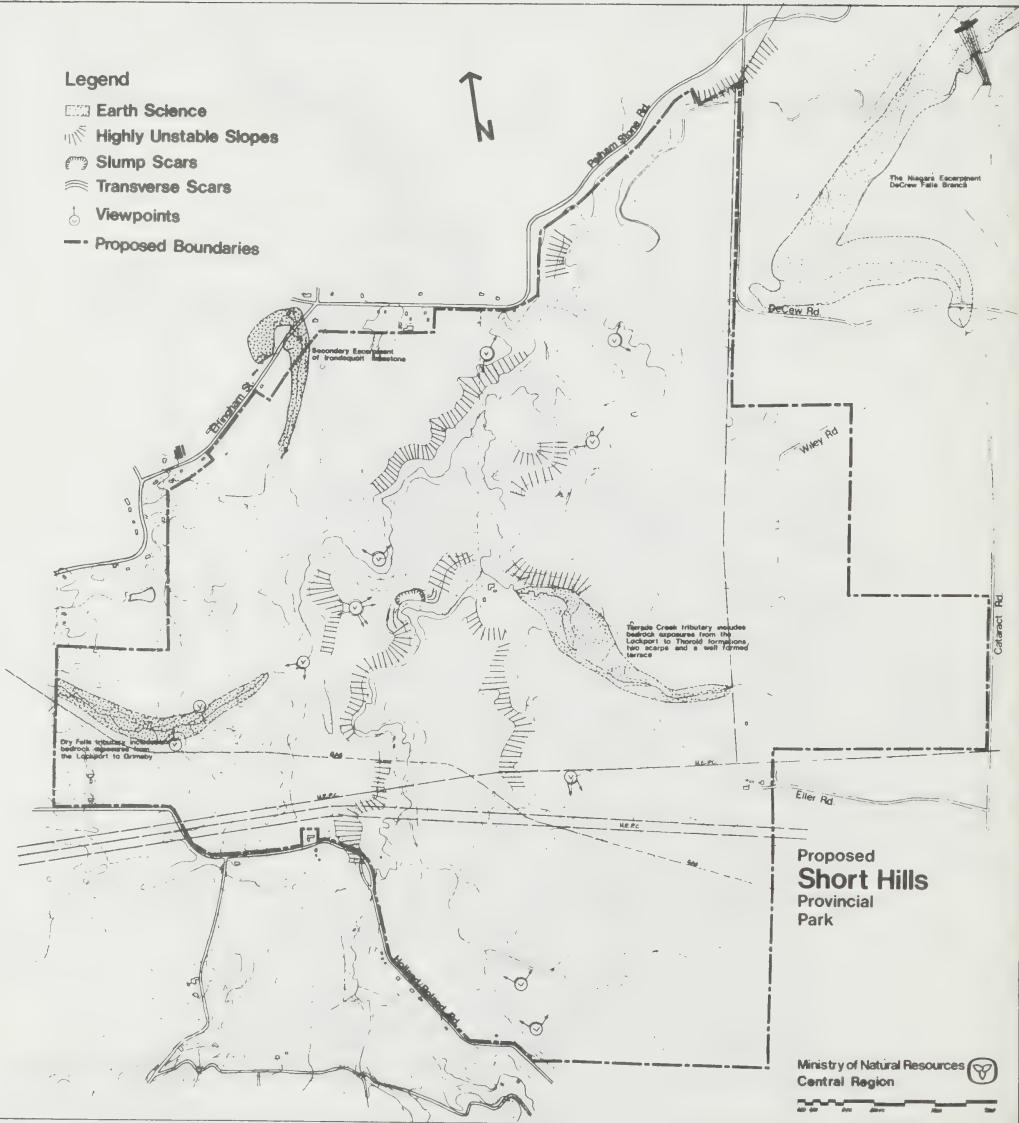
- [Solid black square] over 20 %
- [Hatched square] 10-20 %
- [Light gray square] 5-10 %
- [Dotted square] lowland areas
- [White square] plateau areas
- [Contour line icon] contours (10' interval)
- [Dashed line icon] proposed boundaries



Geological Features

Legend

- Earth Science
- Highly Unstable Slopes
- Slump Scars
- Transverse Scars
- Viewpoints
- Proposed Boundaries



Insecticides and Herbicides:

RECOMMENDATION NO. 13: The general use of chemicals for vegetation and insect control should not be permitted within the park except in the event of specific problems which might cause permanent damage to the park environment and detract from the visitor experience.

Fish and Wildlife:

RECOMMENDATION NO. 14: A water management plan should be established to rationalize and maximize the potential for stream and pond fishing. Owners of property in the headwaters of the Twelve Mile Creek should be encouraged and assisted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Conservation Authority to improve the streams for brook trout.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 15: A variety of terrestrial wildlife habitats are present in the park. The establishment of a wildlife management programme should be planned for the maintenance of wildlife populations and nature study. The introduction of animals not native to the park should be prohibited.

Vegetation:

RECOMMENDATION NO. 16: Vegetation management should be directed toward protecting the landform, maintaining the existing forest, providing shade for recreation, and providing aesthetic and educational experiences. It is neither necessary nor desirable that all areas be reforested. Large areas should be set aside for natural reforestation. Tree and shrub planting should include only those species native to the park area.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 17: The forest areas should be managed for ecological, aesthetic and educational purposes.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 18: The Ministry of Natural Resources should assume the responsibility of managing vegetation within the Ontario Hydro rights-of-way which exist in the park.

4. BRUCE TRAIL

RECOMMENDATION NO. 19: It is recommended that the Ministry of Natural Resources preserve and maintain the Bruce Trail to and through the park area in cooperation and consultation with the Niagara Bruce Trail Club whose voluntary work contribution should be recognized and encouraged.

5. CONTINUING RESEARCH

RECOMMENDATION NO. 20: A qualified interpretive naturalist or biologist should be retained as a full time staff member in the park. The duties would be to maintain and co-ordinate ongoing research.

V. RECREATION AND EDUCATION

1. OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES

The recommendation of a lightly-developed park concept in which protection of the natural values would be given priority sets the pattern for the types of activities best suited for the park. On this basis, no activity which would damage, destroy, or otherwise impair the geological, biological, historical, and archaeological significance should be permitted.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 21: No Recreational or Educational activities should be permitted that could singularly or cumulatively seriously damage, destroy, or otherwise impair the geological, biological, historical or archaeological values of the park.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 22: In order to illustrate the concept of low intensity use, the following outdoor activities could be considered for the recreational programme.

Summer:

Walking, hiking, viewing	Bird watching
Walk-in short term camping	Photography
Picnicking	Painting and sketching
Horseback riding	Fishing
Orienteering	Bicycling
Vita parcours	Interpretive programme

Winter:

Cross-country skiing	Horse drawn sleigh riding
Snowshoeing	Ski journing
Tobogganing	Photography
Ice skating	Painting and sketching
Walking, hiking, viewing	Bird watching
Horseback riding	Orienteering
Walk-in camping	Novice downhill skiing

Walking, hiking, viewing

RECOMMENDATION NO. 23: Careful consideration should be given to establishing a network of trails throughout the park, to allow optimum participant movement with a minimum of damage to the environment.

These trails, designed for the walker, hiker, may have surfaces ranging from the natural environment to an especially prepared surface which will prevent soil erosion, or allow safe and easy access for the handicapped in wheelchairs. They should be planned to be of various lengths and degrees of difficulty and for interpretation purposes to meet the needs of most park users.

At appropriate points along the trails, scenic lookout areas should be designated. Any construction required should use natural materials to blend in with the immediate environment.

Walk-in short term camping

RECOMMENDATION NO. 24: The only type of camping to be allowed should be walk-in short term camping which would provide for the needs of the Bruce Trail hiker and the park user who enjoys camping without modern conveniences.

The length of stay should be restricted to a short term only, possibly three nights, in order to prevent long-term use on park property. The number of campsites should be limited to prevent damage to the environment.

The campsites should be planned within Environmental Areas D.

Picnicking

RECOMMENDATION NO. 25: Picnic areas should be provided for the public. Special attention should be given to the design and location of picnic areas close to the parking areas. Small picnic sites may be permitted in carefully selected areas such as adjacent to scenic lookouts or other areas where people may stop to enjoy the benefits of the park.

Horseback riding

RECOMMENDATION NO. 26: Horseback riding should be allowed as an activity in the park. Special trails should be provided specifically for horseback riding in Environmental Areas C and D. Horses should be prohibited in key Environmental Areas and restricted to designated trails, fields, and certain periods of the year.

Orienteering

RECOMMENDATION NO. 27: The sport of orienteering has been increasing in popularity in Ontario and should be allowed to be practiced in the park except in Environmental Areas A. Organized orienteering could be practiced but only under the guidance and supervision of park authorities.

Vita parcours

RECOMMENDATION NO. 28: A carefully designed vita parcours (exercise trail) should be established in the park.

Fishing

RECOMMENDATION NO. 29: Fishing should be permitted in designated streams and during times approved by the park authorities according to the Ontario Fishery Regulations.

Bicycling

RECOMMENDATION NO. 30: Bicycle trails to the park should be encouraged. Bicycle riding within the park should be permitted on designated trails. The utilization of Hydro rights-of-way for this purpose should be given consideration. Adequate provision for parking and the security of bicycles should be available for the park user.

WINTER ACTIVITIES

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing

RECOMMENDATION NO. 31: Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing should have the freedom of the park when there is sufficient snow to prevent ecological damage.

Tobogganng

RECOMMENDATION NO. 32: Tobogganng should be made available for the public especially in Environmental Areas D. Since the Short Hills have many excellent hills, a number of the hills could be designated for family tobogganng.

Ice skating

RECOMMENDATION NO. 33: Ice skating should be allowed on the streams and ponds which may be appropriate for such an activity. If such facilities are not appropriate, the Ministry of Natural Resources may wish to consider an area which can be flooded to provide this activity in Environmental Areas D.

Horseback riding

RECOMMENDATION NO. 34: Horseback riding in the winter should be allowed, but restricted to designated trails and fields in the areas mentioned above.

Walk-in camping

RECOMMENDATION NO. 35: Winter camping is not a popular activity but is attracting more enthusiasts. Provisions should be made for this activity in the same camp areas as may be provided for summer use. Special areas close to the administrative facilities could be designated as a safety measure in case of emergencies.

Horse drawn sleigh riding and ski journing

RECOMMENDATION NO. 36: These activities, although rather uncommon in the Niagara Peninsula, would add additional excitement to winter activities in the park. However, they would have to be restricted to designated trails appropriate for such activities.

Novice downhill skiing

RECOMMENDATION NO. 37: The park has many excellent hills for the novice skier. Provisions should be made for this sport in a suitable environmental area since novice skiing facilities are limited in the Niagara Peninsula.

2. RECREATIONAL USES INCOMPATIBLE TO THE PARK

RECOMMENDATION NO. 38: Outdoor activities considered as undesirable for the recreational programmes in the park are:

- Motorized vehicles including snowmobiles, motorcycles, mini bikes, all-terrain vehicles or other mechanized vehicles;
- Car and trailer camping;
- Competitive athletic fields and sports facilities;
- Sport hunting;
- All activities which require the streams to be altered or changed for recreational purposes.

Motorized vehicles

RECOMMENDATION NO. 39: In compliance with the majority of briefs received, the Committee recommends that motorized vehicles should not be permitted in the park. Noise, disturbance to the fragile environment and to wildlife are the reasons for this recommendation. The Committee recommends that facilities for snowmobiles and motor bikes should be available in the Peninsula. Because of the increasing number and popularity of these vehicles, the Ministry of Natural Resources should make provisions in the Beaverdams - Lake Gibson Complex area where appropriate areas may be designated that would not interfere with private land owners.

Car and trailer camping

RECOMMENDATION NO. 40: The Committee decided that because of the fragile environment and restricted space available within the park, car and trailer camping would not be appropriate.

After studying statistics on the number of private and public car and trailer camp facilities in the Niagara Region, the Committee agreed that there was no immediate need to provide camping facilities for the user. However, if the need arises, camping facilities could be provided in the Beaverdams - Lake Gibson Complex near the lakeshores appropriate for such facilities and by private facilities in the vicinity of the park.

Competitive athletic fields and facilities

RECOMMENDATION NO. 41: Competitive athletic fields and facilities for outdoor activities such as golf courses, tennis courts, competitive baseball and softball fields would not be compatible within the park, but should be feasible in an extended park area particularly in association with Brock University.

Sport hunting

RECOMMENDATION NO. 42: Sport hunting within the park should not be permitted because of the small area, urban location, danger to other park users, and the importance of recreational wildlife viewing.

3. NATURE INTERPRETATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The establishment of Short Hills Provincial Park provides the opportunity for a unique educational programme that could be planned in cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, the four regional Boards of Education, Universities and Community Colleges. Too often where a single jurisdiction has exclusive use of a facility or an attractive area, the potential of the area is rarely optimized.

The Short Hills Provincial Park is one of the last natural areas to be found in the peninsula. Its value as a quiet refuge for nature and man will only increase as the pressures of urbanization evolve. As the majority of park users will likely be from the peninsula area, a year-round interpretive and education programme should receive high priority for a wide variety of age and interest groups. It should be fresh and imaginative while at the same time ensure protection of the park's natural attributes.

The Advisory Committee understands that the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Conservation Authority, the Boards of Education, and other agencies have programmes which complement one another and are capable of working together towards a common goal. The recommendations submitted jointly by the Lincoln County Board of Education, Lincoln County Separate School Board, Niagara South Board of Education, and the Welland County Roman Catholic School Board are supported in principle by the Committee. This spirit of unanimity should be encouraged for it could provide optimum use for facilities both inside and outside the park that are being financed by all citizens.

Interpretation and Environmental Education Goal

RECOMMENDATION NO. 43: The interpretive and outdoor education programme should provide a wide range of opportunities for high quality outdoor recreational experiences as well as facilities and services enabling the park visitor to understand, appreciate, and enjoy the park environment, its facilities and management.

Orientation

RECOMMENDATION NO. 44: It should be a primary objective of the programme to orient the park visitors to the special qualities, activities, services, and management of the park environment and the significance of that environment relative to the society in which they live. To accomplish this, an information system of publications and personal services combined with advertising in the various media outside of the park is recommended.

Interpretive Tools and Techniques

RECOMMENDATION NO. 45: The year-round interpretive programme should make use of such activities and facilities as displays, audiovisual services, walking and hiking trails, theme conducted walks, multi-use amphitheatres, and programmes designed to educate the park visitor in conservation and management techniques. Use should also be made of special areas in and beyond the park; for example, St. Johns Conservation Area, Fonthill Kame, Morningstar Mill, and St. Johns West Historic Sites to complement and expand the regional character of the proposed programme.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 46: The Ministry of Natural Resources should designate and manage sections of the park for outdoor education purposes.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 47: The Ministry of Natural Resources should conduct an outdoor education programme in cooperation with the four Regional Boards of Education, the Conservation Authority, Universities, Community Colleges, and private land owners on a year-round basis.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 48: The Ministry of Natural Resources should establish an Outdoor Education Advisory Committee to assist the Ministry in the planning and development of comprehensive Outdoor Education Programmes. The membership on the Committee should include representatives of the four School Boards and other educational institutions in the Niagara Region.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 49: The Committee recommends that demonstration farming be maintained by the Ministry that would interpret the traditional and historical farming methods of the Niagara Peninsula. Also, a museum for interpretive purposes could be located in an old mill or building of some historical value.

The St. Johns Outdoor Study Centre has provided many children with a greater understanding and appreciation for the outdoors and has proven the value of such programmes in the peninsula. However, its size has limited the scope of possible interpretive programmes.

New facilities specifically designed to meet the needs of a comprehensive programme would increase the park's capacity to serve the citizen's outdoor education requirements.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 50: The Ministry of Natural Resources could maintain an Outdoor Educational Centre for year-round Interpretive Programming using existing facilities in the area wherever possible.

A parking area, buffered from the centre, should be provided with separate facilities for the loading and unloading of school bus groups.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 51: Specially designed outdoor education programmes for pre-school children should be investigated by the Ministry of Natural Resources. This would not provide a baby-sitting service, but rather a meaningful experience for the children while their parents are utilizing other park facilities.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 52: Facilities for research activities could be made available by the Ministry of Natural Resources in accordance with existing Provincial Park Policy. However, research should be limited to projects which have relevance to the management of the park and which cannot be carried out as successfully elsewhere.

V1. UTILITIES AND SERVICES

1. Access

RECOMMENDATION NO. 53: It is recommended that there should be one major access point and other supplementary access points to the park.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 54: All access points should be suitably located and designed. Facilities for access to the park by public transportation vehicles such as buses should be available.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 55: A series of small parking lots should be provided at each access point and the areas should be suitably landscaped and buffered. Separate parking areas at each access point should be planned for buses. All parking lots should be surfaced according to the degree of use.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 56: In the design and construction of all park facilities such as parking areas, trails, washrooms, and buildings, careful consideration should be given to the specific requirements of handicapped persons.

2. Existing Roads

RECOMMENDATION NO. 57: The character, grade and curve of roads bordering the park should be maintained as they are at present. The possibility of widening the roads at access points to allow for the construction of a boulevard or avenue with appropriate planting of trees and shrubs should be investigated.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 58: Hog's Back Road should be closed within the park boundaries since it is no longer functional as a vehicular roadway, but it should be retained and maintained for potential trail use.

3. Circulation Within The Park

Trails - Walking and Hiking

RECOMMENDATION NO. 59: Walking and hiking trails surfaced with appropriate materials such as wood chips should be provided and appropriately marked in suitable locations through the park. In the design and construction of the trails, careful consideration should be given to the requirements of handicapped persons.

Trails - Equestrian

RECOMMENDATION NO. 60: Equestrian trails and field areas should be provided and appropriately marked in suitable locations. Use of the trails should be restricted during periods of wet weather to prevent damage to the resource base.

Shelters

RECOMMENDATION NO. 61: Shelters should be provided in designated picnic areas and other appropriate locations.

4. Fees

RECOMMENDATION NO. 62: It is recommended that no entrance fee be charged because of the many points of entry and the urban location of the park, but that a Motorized Vehicle parking fee be charged in accordance with Ontario Provincial Park Policies.

5. Water Supply

RECOMMENDATION NO. 63: The existing St. Catharines municipal water supply in the area along Pelham Road should be extended to the park in that area. Water for other areas of the park should be obtained from drilled wells and made safe. Provisions should be made for the year-round supply and use of water in all areas of the park as required.

6. Sewage

RECOMMENDATION NO. 64: The sewage disposal systems should be suitable for year-round use where required. All washrooms should be suitably designed to accommodate the requirements of handicapped persons.

7. Power Supply

RECOMMENDATION NO. 65: The existing power supply in the area should be extended to the park and the required internal power supply to various parts of the park should be located underground wherever possible provided no environmental damage is caused.

VII. FUTURE PLANNING PROGRAMME

1. Master Planning Team

RECOMMENDATION NO. 66: The Ministry of Natural Resources should establish a planning team at once to commence the preparation of a detailed Master Plan for the park.

2. Public Meetings

RECOMMENDATION NO. 67: Public meetings are necessary to inform the public of park planning proposals and to receive comments on the appropriateness of a preliminary Master Plan.

3. Integration

RECOMMENDATION NO. 68: Emphasis should be placed on the need for liaison and integration of the Ministry's park development plans with those of other governmental bodies to produce a co-ordinated regional park sub-system which is an integral part of the provincial outdoor recreation system.

4. Architecture and Landscape Design

RECOMMENDATION NO. 69: In advance of development, architectural and landscape design standards should be formulated which will be in keeping with the physical character of the park. Structural materials should be of high quality and should blend well with the natural landscape.

5. Ongoing and Future Planning Studies

RECOMMENDATION NO. 70: A programme of continuing research about the park and its environs is an essential requirement for the development and management of the park. Such a programme should include the following:

- Regional Study - the relationship of the park to the surrounding region and the effect of development of the park and of the region on each other;
- Visitor Use Study - determination of use and capacity as well as visitor needs and preferences;
- Land Use Study - modified land use based on changing visitor needs and desires;
- Ecological Study - further detailed studies to ascertain the characteristics of the ecosystems within the park and their location;
- Historical and Archaeological Study - in depth studies of major themes related to the park area and vicinity;
- Geomorphological Study - inventory of geomorphological features of the park;
- Wildlife Study - for management and interpretive purposes;
- Fish and Stream Study - for management and interpretive purposes;
- Utilities and Services Study - for feasibility of alternative servicing plans.

PART 11: THE REVIEW OF PARK BOUNDARIES

VIII. AREAS OF POSSIBLE PARK EXTENSION

The Advisory Committee was specifically asked by the Minister of Natural Resources to review the park boundaries. The justifications for park extensions from the area as originally proposed include:

- a) Many briefs submitted to the Advisory Committee argued the need for an extension of the park area over adjacent localities.
- b) All reports which have examined the character and potential of the Niagara Region have emphasized strongly the importance of an area with interrelated components for recreational, ecological, natural, and historical purposes. This significant area, variously described as the Short Hills Area, the Niagara Escarpment or the Valley of Twelve Mile Creek, is in every instance more extensive than the park as originally proposed. These reports include: The Gertler Report; Niagara Escarpment Task Force Report; Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Report, Volumes 1 and 2; Philips Consulting Report; Draft Official Plan for the Regional Municipality of Niagara, and the Niagara Escarpment Commission Planning Area Report.
- c) The Committee considers that the boundaries as originally proposed reflect an important and desirable initiating concept as a basis for further action, but they are not drawn in relation to either topographical, geomorphological, scenic, natural, environmental, or historical features. Assessments of these criteria indicate that expansions in different directions would be appropriate and that a more extensive area should be considered.

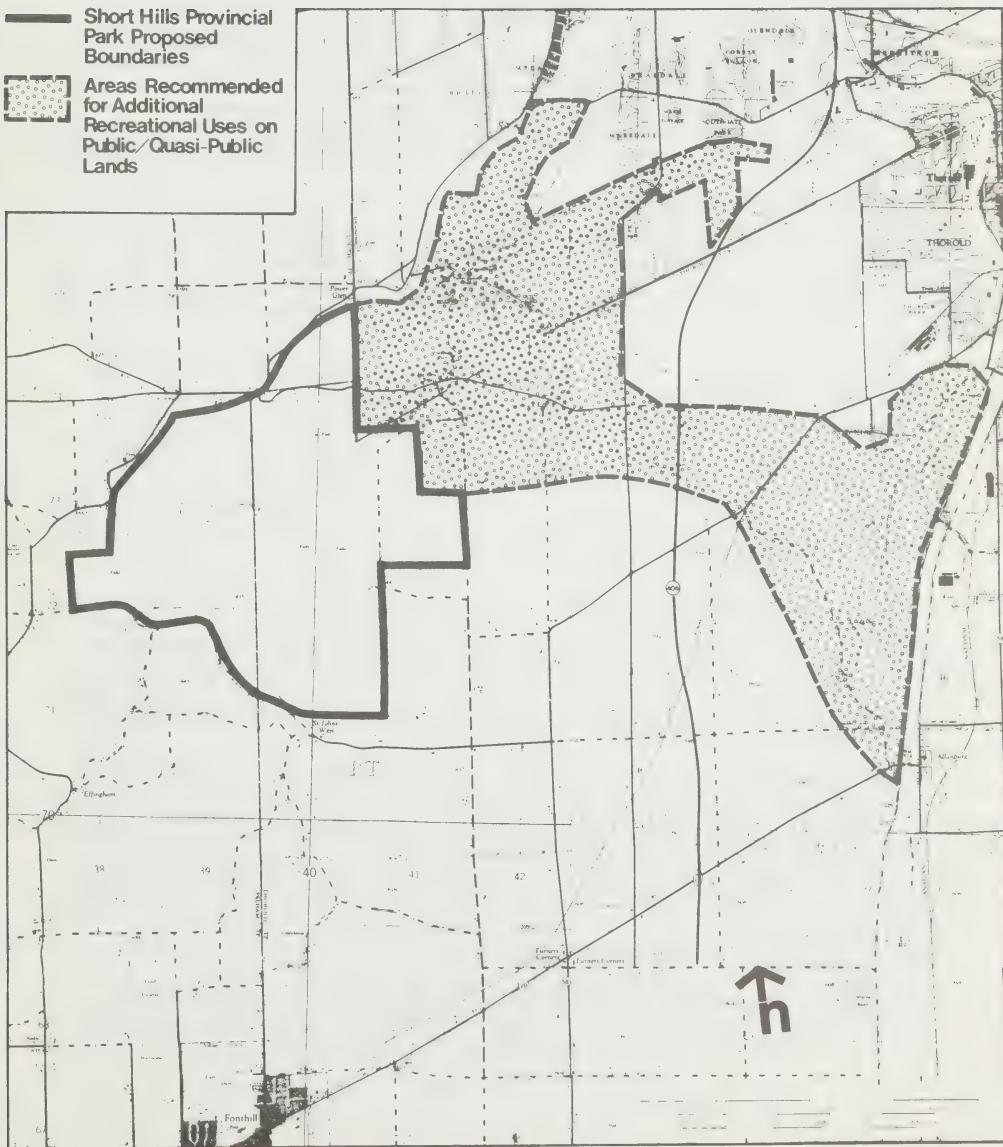
Proposed Short Hills Provincial Park: Its Peripheral Areas of Public Lands

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Legend

- Short Hills Provincial Park Proposed Boundaries
- Areas Recommended for Additional Recreational Uses on Public/Quasi-Public Lands



d) The Committee's analysis of the park as proposed, its character and the range of recreational demands on this limited space have led to the conclusion that higher intensity uses should not be permitted. These, if permitted, would destroy the essential natural character of the park. Expansion of the park boundaries is therefore essential to retain the character of the environment within the park, and in order to provide localities within which a more extensive range of facilities may be provided.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 71: The park as originally proposed should be extended. The Advisory Committee has considered several areas for park extensions. These locations are presented in a very generalized form on Figure 7, and indicate areas within which particular principles and policies should be pursued according to recommendations in Sections 1X, X and XI. The areas which should be considered for possible park extension include the following:

The Lower Valley of Twelve Mile Creek

This locality includes the lower slopes and the valley bottom of Twelve Mile Creek. The boundaries are drawn to exclude private properties along Pelham Road and in the Glenridge area of St. Catharines. The reasons for extension in this area include scenic quality, historical, visual, and physical continuity from the park.

The intent is to examine the feasibility of extending the park concept along the valley of Twelve Mile Creek to, past and beyond the DeCew Power Plant of Ontario Hydro. The suggested northern boundary is located at Glendale Avenue, the only continuous east-west road across south St. Catharines. This point is suitable as a major access point, with screened car parking facilities, and as a starting point for hiking and pedestrian trails. It adjoins land used and zoned for recreational activities to the south. This park extension should also be integrated with the proposed recreational developments on a current land fill site off Pelham Road.

The Brow of the Niagara Escarpment

Included is the rim of the Niagara Escarpment because of its outstanding characteristics. Excluded are private properties in the Glenridge area of St. Catharines. This area extends over Ontario Hydro and Brock University lands to approximately Highway 406 as the eastern boundary. Trails, scenic overlooks, and land management procedures are envisaged.

An area around Brock University is included in the hopes that certain aspects of University life might be associated with the park. Possibilities for discussion with the University authorities include; for example, the weekend use of canteen facilities, parking space, the use of lecture rooms, the creation of architectural and other environmental trails within the University campus, special lecture programmes about aspects of the park, and the combined provision of certain sports, recreation and athletic facilities.

The St. Catharines Crushed Stone Quarry

The Committee was asked by the Minister of Natural Resources to comment on this quarry. Various possible uses can be envisaged for this site, ranging from several densities and types of residential activity, through a Sheridan

Park type of community, to a garbage disposal site with full or partial infilling, or an intensive recreation use such as playing fields, a sports complex or botanical gardens.

The Committee cannot recommend any priority of limited park funds for the purchase of this site under park auspices, but would welcome a recreational or conservation use as fitting its important position on the Escarpment edge, its location next to the Short Hills Provincial Park, its proximity close to the residential areas of St. Catharines, and its quality of regional access from the St. David's Road Highway 406, interchange. As something rather distinctive should emerge from the unique possibilities of this site, the Committee would warmly welcome the reclamation and beneficial use of the site by the quarrying industry. Given its important location, a "model project" should have considerable claim to attention.

Irrespective of use, it is considered that (1) the Escarpment edge must remain unimpaired in terms both of the continuity of this slope and its continuous planting, (2) intense planting around the property perimeter (e.g. as at Hamilton Rock Gardens) should be included in any design concept, and (3) a conservation or recreational use would be received with special favour by the Advisory Committee.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 72: The location of the St. Catharines Crushed Stone Quarry should receive special consideration by all planning authorities when determining the future use of this site. The site preferably should be reclaimed for a recreational or conservation use because of its Escarpment position.

The Beaverdams - Lake Gibson Complex

This water complex offers a range of exciting possibilities because of the extensive bodies of water which have been inserted into the terrain from 1829 onwards for hydro, municipal, and former canal purposes. The particular importance of this area is its scope for recreational opportunities considered unsuitable in the park as originally proposed. Such possibilities are enhanced by the existing public ownership of many riparian areas by Ontario Hydro, Brock University, and the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority.

The range of suitable land use purposes includes access to the water body, the possible use of safe areas of the water away from the penstocks and water treatment plant for water-based recreational activities, trails along the lakeshores and the intensive use of the lakeshores, especially where crossed by major roads, for organized sports facilities, camping and picnicking facilities. The eastern boundary is shown arbitrarily on Figure 7 at a road-rail crossing of the water complex, and could reasonably be extended eastwards over derelict land up to the boundary of the Fourth Welland Canal. This extension would then include the routes of the First, Second, and Third Welland Canals within the Extended Park Area. A canal museum or interpretive centre at Allanburg would thus become a distinct possibility. Also, facilities for motorized recreational vehicles using spoil heaps in the vicinity would be another possibility.

The southern boundary intends access to the water body, trails, and camping sites. The boundary is intended to provide for access and recreational land uses in association with the shore-line.

A possible site for a Park Administration headquarters exists on the southern lakeshore, close to major highway access and the above intensive recreation facilities.

The DeCew Falls Area

The DeCew Falls area contains a number of special characteristics including the eastern arm of Twelve Mile Creek, the Escarpment edge with the upper and lower falls, the intervening gorge, and the water complex, with its mill and municipal reservoirs. It provides a possible nodal or hub area for the starting point of trails into the park and its extended areas. Linkage should be along the valley floor and above the Escarpment with trails.

Excluded from the park boundaries are the private houses along DeCew Road. Public Land Ownership by Ontario Hydro and the Regional Municipality of Niagara makes expansion into this area a feasible proposition.

The Effingham - St. Johns Area

This area includes land south from the park towards Fonthill. It is of substantial visual importance, significant for its environmental characteristics and encompasses the upper waters of the streams which drain through the park as originally proposed. This area is primarily under private ownership, and the policies recommended are discussed in Sections X and XI below.

West to Rockway

Again, under private ownership, this locality connects the park westwards with the Niagara Escarpment and is traversed by the Bruce Trail.

IX. POLICIES FOR LAND UNDER PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

Transmission lines cross the park and advantage should be taken of their alignment and of the open space below. Suitable permanent planting of a type not to interfere with the transmission lines should be placed on side hills and valley bottoms. The lines might be suitable for long distance trails (e.g. for horses or bicycles) traversing the park complex, or for more localized pathways and service access.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 73: Agreement should be sought with Ontario Hydro in order that the open space under transmission lines can be used for park purposes.

The basic activities on publicly owned lands in the areas proposed for park expansion should be recognized, together with possible demands for additional plant, buildings, parking space, and access. Also, in the case of some Ontario Hydro lands and, perhaps, other public lands, there are existing agricultural agreements in effect with farmers in the area. These agreements should be recognized and not interferred with pertaining to the joint use of public lands for recreational purposes. Within this context, agreements should be negotiated to obtain the use of water and land for park purposes as indicated previously.

The achievement of park oriented rights through agreement would vary according to the nature of the property under consideration, but might include:

- access rights;
- fishing and other water use rights;
- scenic overlook rights;
- timber control for recreational or conservation purposes;
- conservation and land management;
- nature preserves;
- limited development rights, such as for campgrounds and picnic areas.

The localities under review should emphasize land planning and policies of particular benefit and advantage to the proposed park. This will assist greatly in retaining its inherent appeal as a quiet locality of minimum development.

The prospects presented by the above arguments are most exciting. They combine the dual use of land. By negotiated agreements, it should be possible to extend park facilities to the public advantage with the minimum of disturbance and in accord with the existing attributes of the land.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 74: Agreement should be sought with Ontario Hydro, Brock University, the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority and the Regional Municipality of Niagara in order that their lands close to the proposed park may be managed for park purposes and in pursuit of park objectives. This provision should be undertaken having full regard for the existing operations on these lands, and without detriment to the possible expansion of existing activities on their present sites. From discussion and correspondence, these agreements would seem to be possible and should be initiated by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

X. POLICIES FOR LAND UNDER PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

With the acquisition of land in the proposed park area, the incidence of hooliganism and vandalism by certain members of the public (hopefully, a small minority) has increased. Also trespassing outwards from the park over existing private properties has become a problem. To overcome these problems, the appointment of a park superintendent and other uniformed Ministry employees to prevent destruction in the park, and the clear marking of park boundaries by coloured poles or stones should be considered.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 75: An immediate requirement is for park surveillance to prevent vandalism. The boundaries of the lands purchased for the park should be clearly marked to prevent trespass onto adjacent private properties.

Supervision of the park by park authorities and its peripheral areas with the co-operation of regional police programmes should be sufficient to ensure the privacy of nearby homes and private operations. Because of the number and rural nature of private lands in the areas adjacent to the park, particularly the communities of St. Johns and Effingham, extra measures are needed to ensure that park users do not interfere with the enjoyment and privacy of these residents and that vandalism does not become a problem to nearby farms.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 76: The park authorities should endeavour to ensure that vandalism does not occur in the park and also that trespass from the park area is prevented. If necessary, arrangements should be made with the police forces in the area to provide assistance to prevent the occurrence of vandalism and trespass.

The Draft Policy Recommendation Report discussed at the Public Hearing on May 6, 1974, in the Education Theatre, Brock University, St. Catharines, evoked the strong public response that no land acquisition or obligatory public encroachment through enforced land purchase should take place. Within the peripheral areas of predominantly private land ownership, many of the existing features have been retained or achieved over time by the present residents and/or their families. The owners in this respect are often the best custodians of cherished ecological, topographical, and historical resources. The overall attractiveness of the area must in large part be attributed to these patterns of ownership and to how this land is and has been managed. Also, many ownerships are involved, ranging from agricultural units to individual homes on small lots. Given these circumstances, it is emphatic that neither the compulsory acquisition of land nor the obligatory extension of the park boundaries southwards is either recommended or intended in this report.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 77: The park should not be extended compulsorily, nor should land be acquired by obligatory purchase in the peripheral areas.

The exceptionally high quality of land to the south of the park in the Effingham - St. Johns area is well known. These characteristic features include incised valleys, steep slopes, the headwaters of creeks which drain through the proposed park area, springs in the sand and gravel deposits, attractive woodland areas, narrow and winding roads, prime ecological sites, privately developed recreational areas, golf course, ski facilities at Fonthill, riding stables and horse riding areas, agricultural land, horticulture, and existing private residences often with landscaped grounds of a particularly pleasing character. The variety and characteristics of these uses and activities contribute much to the present attractiveness of the Short Hills environment.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 78: A range of existing uses compatible with park purposes exist in the vicinity of the proposed park. As the environment in physical and human terms is attractive, these land uses and activities should be encouraged to remain.

Within the framework of the above recommendations and without changing their intentions, land is always coming on the market for sale. There may be willing vendors on adjoining lands including those who would like to see their property used for recreation and/or conservation purposes in perpetuity. Also; for example, there might be an owner of a large property willing to sell his land but wanting to remain in the house on a reduced parcel. In other instances, owners may be willing to negotiate access or other agreements to purchase at current market value. Many arrangements are possible by mutual agreement.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 79: There should be no further extension of the park to the south, except by willing vendors on adjoining properties to the proposed park.

Camp Wetaskiwin is a long established facility which introduces many young persons to the joys of outdoor living. Also, the camp fulfills the educational and philosophical roles envisaged for the park. In this regard, the existing land uses and activities would seem compatible with existence in a Provincial Park. However, it is possible that an enclave of private ownership surrounded by publicly owned land could result in serious administrative difficulties if further Scout facilities were required or the existing quality of management diminished. In addition, the detail of park planning may require access to part of the lands and problems may be posed by vehicular access into the interior of the park area.

Given the high quality of the organization which is involved and the presumption of its continuing existence, the Advisory Committee suggests negotiated agreements to ensure that activities on the site and land management remain fully in accord with park management policies. The Boy Scout Association is confident that their present type of operations can be maintained. From discussion and correspondence, agreement would seem to be possible.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 80: A negotiated agreement should be sought with the Boy Scout Association to ensure the compatibility of their activities and land management programmes with park objectives. If a satisfactory agreement cannot be negotiated, or if the site is no longer required for its present purposes, then the land should be purchased by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

As population increases and as more people use the park, there is concern that park users will not confine walking to public lands or vehicles to controlled routes. There is concern that park users will disrupt the quiet and privacy of landowners causing nuisance by raising dust on the country roads, vandalizing farms and orchards and by trespassing on private property. These concerns are shared by the Committee and by all involved in establishing parks near centres of population. The range of uses recommended for the park emphasizes quiet activities that respect the environment. Park management policies must be strongly enforced when the park is formally established. It is hoped that this will not be delayed and the present distress of nearby landowners thus prolonged.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 81: A permanent liaison committee with local residents should be established.

XI. LAND USE CONTROLS

There is concern that the area around the park might become commercialized or unsightly. Many zoning and land use controls now exist in and around the proposed park area. These are the responsibility of municipal, regional and provincial levels of government. Such controls, and those of the Niagara Escarpment Commission should be used for following essential purposes:

- to protect and improve the quality of the water resources, the headwater springs, and the watershed of the 12 Mile Creek System;
- to protect and improve the quality of the land for farm, recreation, and rural community uses;
- to prevent destruction or deleterious development which would harm the existing environmental qualities;
- to retain the existing scenic attractiveness of the area.

Prohibited uses must also be defined, and should include:

- any use that would create damage to the environmental features of the park and/or proposed areas for expansion through air, water or land pollution (as defined in the Environment Protection Act, 1971), lack of water management measures, excessive noise, etc.;
- industrial and commercial uses not obviously oriented to the recreational purposes of the Short Hills Provincial Park;
- high density or large-scale residential uses, including strict control of severances in the headwaters area, or residential developments beyond the carrying capacity of the land;
- new transportation corridors, and road widening or improvement schemes detrimental to the existing scenic character, including new provincial or regional highways across the headwaters area of the Short Hills environment;
- advertising, except to a limited extent and size, in controlled locations and only where directly related to an adjacent use.

The Niagara Escarpment Commission appointed by the Ontario Government has been given a mandate to establish a Master Plan for the Niagara Escarpment together with the responsibility to designate specific areas for Development Control. Since the proposed park area is within the Niagara Escarpment, the Advisory Committee would appreciate the following recommendation being brought to the attention of the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 82: Land use controls should be used as the basis for evaluating development proposals, and with the purpose of retaining, or enhancing the land, water and visual qualities of the Short Hills area. The Niagara Escarpment Commission as required in its mandate from the Ontario Government should carefully consider the establishment of land use or development controls for the area surrounding the park. The suggestions outlined above in this report should be taken into account with particular attention given to the geographic area which encompasses the headwater springs of the Twelve Mile Creek.

One further area for more effective controls is suggested. The Committee suggests that the Regional Municipality should apply more sophisticated controls on the approach highways, including Provincial Highways, in order to prevent the location of structures that are not in harmony with the very scenic character of the landscape. It is also noted that the Regional Municipality has the power to pass bylaws which supersede any other existing bylaws on the lands and that this power applies to a depth of 150 feet. These powers should be used, coupled with the new amendments to the Planning Act, to provide effective controls on all approach roads to the park. Ribbons of housing development, excessive advertising, or lines of motels on approach roads would be inappropriate and detrimental to park objectives.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 83: More effective controls are required along approach highways to the park.

X11. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE PERIPHERAL AREAS

The peripheral areas of Figure 7, because of their location and terrain, provide specific opportunities for an expansion of those opportunities recommended for consideration in the park as proposed. Quiet, nature oriented activities are generally suitable in these localities.

Recreational uses deemed unsuitable for the proposed park are frequently suitable for location alongside the Beaverdams - Lake Gibson Water Complex and further east towards the canals. Such additional activities, provided that they do not cause a nuisance to the property owners in the area, might include:

SUMMER

Motorcycle trails	Shooting ranges
Car and trailer camping	Sports fields and courts
Picnic areas	Swimming
Canoeing	Bird dog trials
Sailing	Uses and activities listed
Archery ranges	before as appropriate for the park.

WINTER

Snowmobiling
Enlarged outdoor skating facilities
Ice fishing

In the area around the park as originally proposed, there are several historic features which should be considered in relation to the outdoor education and interpretive programmes suggested for the Short Hills Provincial Park in an earlier section of this report. The Historic Context of the park area is shown in Figure 8.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 84: Intensive recreational activities not suitable for inclusion in the park area as originally proposed should be incorporated in suitable extended areas. The Beaverdams - Lake Gibson Water Complex and canal system areas seem particularly suited for such purposes, and feasibility studies should be initiated.

The park is intended as a quiet, nature oriented area where people can enjoy the qualities of the environment. It lies immediately next to urban areas, and may currently be approached on foot via the Bruce Trail or via public roads. Considerable improvement in pedestrian access to the park is desirable, and this should be achieved especially from the St. Catharines, Thorold and Fonthill areas. The Bruce Trail, now somewhat tenuous and based on private agreements, should remain and be established on a permanent basis.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 85: Suitable arrangements should be made for the provision of permanent access into the park by pedestrian trails.

Historic Context

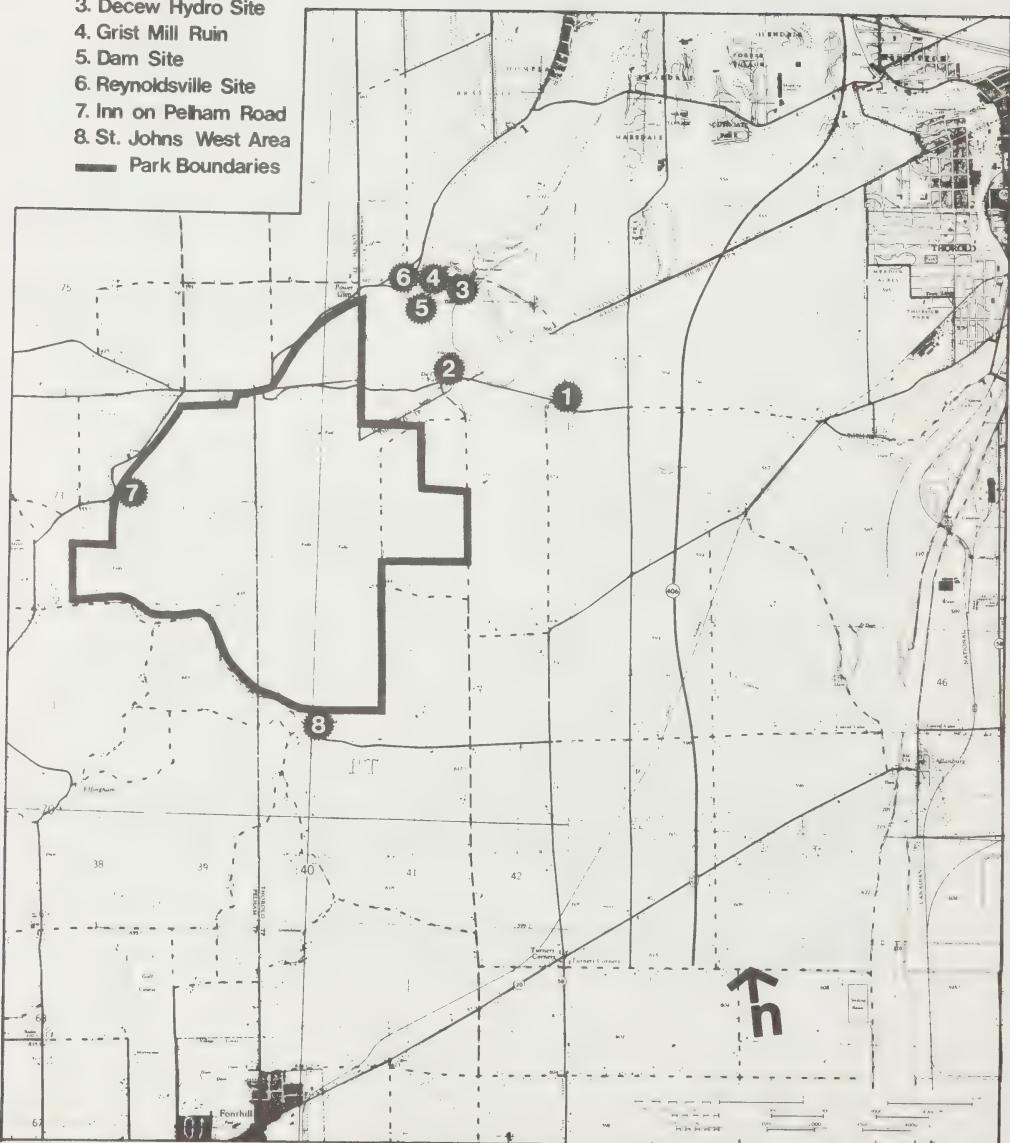
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Legend

1. Decou House
2. Morningstar Mill
3. Decew Hydro Site
4. Grist Mill Ruin
5. Dam Site
6. Reynoldsville Site
7. Inn on Pelham Road
8. St. Johns West Area

— Park Boundaries



P.O. Box 1070,
FONTHILL, Ontario.
L0S 1EO.

July 29, 1974.

Dear Sir or Madam:

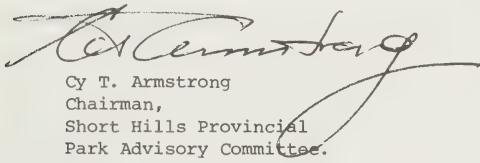
Since last October, the Advisory Committee appointed by the Honourable Leo Bernier, Minister of Natural Resources, has been engaged in the formulation of recommendations regarding the planning of a new Provincial Park in the Short Hills area southwest of the City of St. Catharines, Ontario. During this period, valuable commentary and advice was provided by interested citizens and local government officials in response to the Committee's Public Participation Programme that involved Public Hearings and the soliciting of briefs.

On Tuesday, July 9, 1974, the Policy Recommendations Report of the Committee was submitted to the Minister of Natural Resources for review and consideration. At this time, we are pleased to distribute copies of our report together with a statement by the Honourable Leo Bernier, Minister of Natural Resources, as a response to the policy recommendations.

As preparation of a Master Plan for the park moves forward, it is the intention of the Advisory Committee to provide an opportunity for further public involvement, the actual arrangements for which will be announced in the near future.

We look forward to the continuing involvement of the public in the planning of the Short Hills Provincial Park.

Yours truly,



Cy T. Armstrong
Chairman,
Short Hills Provincial
Park Advisory Committee.

CTA/gv

Enclosures.

Statement By: The Honourable Leo Bernier, Minister of Natural Resources, on receipt of the Policy Recommendations Report of the Short Hills Provincial Park Advisory Committee, August 6, 1974.

After reviewing the Policy Recommendations Report of the Short Hills Provincial Park Advisory Committee, I would like to congratulate the members of the Committee and its Chairman, Mr. Cy T. Armstrong, for their thorough study and worthy contribution to the planning of this new Provincial Park in the Niagara Escarpment area southwest of the City of St. Catharines, Ontario.

I am pleased to commend the Committee for their encouragement of a wide range of public participation whereby over 350 submissions were received and carefully considered during the preparation of the Policy Recommendations Report. As further stages in the planning of the park progress, I look forward to receiving the Advisory Committee's recommended Master Plan.

With few exceptions, I support the policy recommendations submitted to me by the Committee. As you can understand, certain subject matters in the report require further study and investigation before a decision can be made.

The Government accepts the major recommendations of the report that the new park in the Short Hills area of the Niagara Peninsula be named the "Short Hills Provincial Park". Also accepted is the direction set out for this near urban Provincial Park in the recommended goal, objectives and Natural Environment Park classification which places emphasis on the protection and preservation of the natural environment while providing for lightly-developed, year-round day use recreational activities and walk-in short term camping.

As planning for the park progresses, the Ministry of Natural Resources, taking into consideration the Committee's recommendation, intends to continue and enhance the Interim Management Programme for lands acquired by the Crown. Further it is accepted that efforts should be undertaken to preserve and maintain the Bruce Trail to and through the park.

The recommendation that walk-in camping should be limited to a short term duration of three nights appears desirable, but since there is no such existing provision in the Provincial Park Regulations the matter will be given further study by my staff.

Based on the deliberations of the Advisory Committee, the Government accepts the recommendation that snowmobiles; motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles; car and trailer camping; competitive sports facilities; sport hunting; and all activities which require the streams to be altered for recreational purposes be prohibited within the originally proposed 1,700 acre park located in the unique Short Hills area. While recognizing the Committee's emphasis on the protection of the unique and fragile natural environment associated with the Short Hills, I am concerned that those user groups represented by the above activities are limited by the lack of provision of appropriate recreational opportunities. Therefore, it is agreed as recommended by the Committee that the Government should attempt to make provision for such activities in appropriate locations, especially on public lands in the area surrounding the park, that would minimize disturbance to private land owners.

In this regard, preliminary discussions have already been held between members of my staff and officials from the public land agencies including St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, Ontario Hydro, Brock University, and the Regional Municipality of Niagara to promote the joint use of certain portions of the lands for the benefit of the public.

The Government is pleased with the emphasis placed on interpretation and environmental education in the Committee's report because of the location of the park in the Niagara Escarpment area and its association with many natural and cultural features in close proximity to the park. The Government is interested in the novel concept of an Outdoor Education Advisory Committee which would facilitate integration and co-operation among the Ministry of Natural Resources, educational agencies and the public in the establishment of comprehensive outdoor educational services which are increasingly important in our society. However, the establishment and structure of such a Committee will receive further study by my staff related to the most effective means of achieving coordination.

Recommendations in the Committee's report concerning access points, parking areas, internal circulation, roads bordering the park and other services such as water supply, sewage disposal and power supply will be dealt with following discussions with appropriate government and planning officials at the various levels of government and during the Master Planning process for the park. With regard to the above utilities and services, the Committee's recommendations related to ensuring minimal interference with the natural environment and that careful consideration should be given to the specific requirements of handicapped persons in the design of park facilities are accepted.

Regarding the Committee's future planning programme recommendations, these are accepted and viewed as providing guidance to the Ministry's ongoing park management research programme.

The Advisory Committee undertook a very comprehensive review of the proposed park boundaries. The Committee's discussion regarding the possible extension of the park contains many matters of interest and concern to the Ministry in terms of the establishment of near urban Provincial Parks. Based on the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the Government will continue to negotiate the purchase of the lands within the originally proposed 1,700 acre park of which approximately 1,257 acres have been acquired. An exception will be the

St. Catharines District Council Boy Scouts of Canada Camp Wetaskiwin property for which a negotiated agreement to ensure the compatibility of their activities and land management programmes with park objectives will be pursued as recommended by the Committee.

With regard to the extension of the park boundaries over existing public lands surrounding the park, my staff in line with the preliminary discussions mentioned earlier involving the officials of the public agencies will endeavour to determine the extent to which certain lands of the agencies could be included in the park. A final decision about public land extensions will be made following the necessary deliberations and the carrying out of appropriate planning studies.

As a result of the concern expressed to the Advisory Committee in response to a draft recommendation for possible expansion of the park over private lands, the Committee's proposal was subsequently revised in the final report. Accordingly, as recommended by the Committee there will be no further extension of the proposed 1,700 acre park to include additional private lands, except from willing vendors of properties adjoining the proposed park.

The Government shares the Advisory Committee's concern about vandalism and trespass in the park area and through close consultation with the local landowners and municipal agencies will endeavour to overcome the situation, but does not accept the recommendation that a permanent liaison committee should be established. I am confident that effective communication can be accomplished through the office of the District Manager of this Ministry, located on Highway 20, Pelham.

As outlined by the Advisory Committee, there is a need for land use controls in the vicinity of the park, particularly the Headwaters of the Twelve Mile Creek. The Committee's recommendations concerning land use controls will be referred to the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the Regional Municipality of Niagara for review and consideration regarding implementation. Similarly, the Committee's discussion and recommendation pertaining to the St. Catharines

Crushed Stone Quarry will be referred to the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the City of St. Catharines for study regarding the future use of the area. At this time, the Government agrees with the Committee's assignment of a low priority to the quarry area in terms of possible inclusion in the Short Hills Provincial Park.

In the event that suitable joint land use agreements are obtained or certain lands are acquired with respect to the public agencies in the vicinity of the park, the Committee's recommendation concerning possible recreational uses for the areas involved will be studied further by my staff.

As a near urban Provincial Park, the Committee's recommendation that suitable arrangements should be made for the provision of permanent access into the park by pedestrian trails deserves consideration and will be referred to my staff for study in consultation with officials from the municipalities of St. Catharines, Thorold and Pelham.

In summary, the Advisory Committee submitted 85 recommendations of which the Government has accepted 64, designated for further study 20, (Recommendations number 24, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57, 58, 63, 64, 65, 71, 72, 74, 82, 83, 84, 85) and not accepted 1, (Recommendation number 81). It is expected that those policy matters requiring further study will be resolved as quickly as possible in order that the planning of the park may proceed with minimum complications.

The policy recommendations provide the basic framework within which the detailed Master Planning programme can now proceed. My staff will begin immediately to prepare a Master Plan for the Short Hills Provincial Park. During this process, the preliminary Master Plan will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee. In addition, the public will be provided with an opportunity to comment on the park development proposals as part of the Committee's continuing public participation programme. The Master Plan is expected to be completed this fall.

At this very significant stage in the planning of the park, I am pleased to acknowledge the contribution towards the establishment of a Provincial Park in the very scenic Short Hills area by my colleague in the Legislature, Mr. Ellis P. Morningstar, MPP for Welland. Mr. Morningstar's continuing interest and support related to the planning of the park is gratefully appreciated.

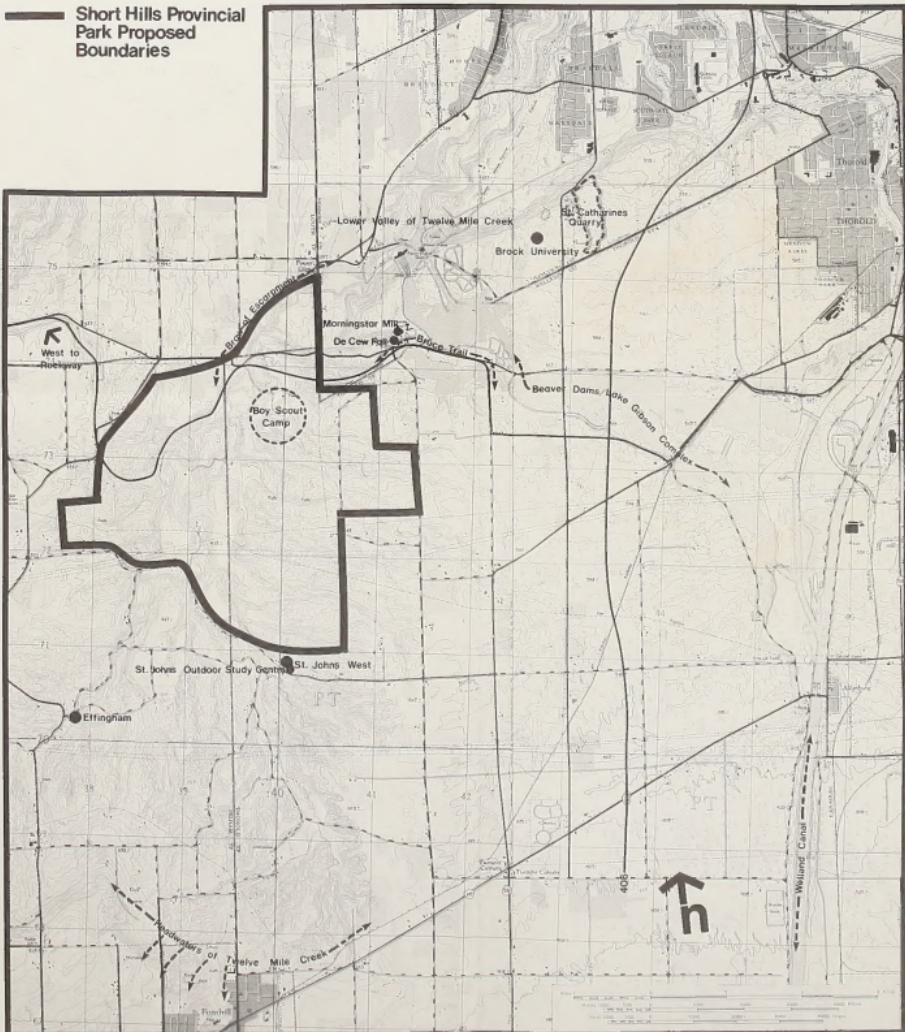
Once again, on behalf of the Government, I would like to express sincere appreciation to the members of the Short Hills Provincial Park Advisory Committee for their very commendable work in the preparation of the Policy Recommendations Report and for the important service they have rendered to the people of Ontario.

Proposed Short Hills Provincial Park Orientation Map

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Legend

Short Hills Provincial Park Proposed Boundaries



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